1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927)1930
NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

243
[438] scoops, paying perhaps eight or nine *centavos* a *cuar-*
[435] *tillo.*

By the third week in December the fields below the
[221] town are still and empty. The last loads carried by
[244] the *burros* are of round green squashes, grown among
[231] the corn. Into some fields the cattle are turned to forage. Above the town, where the fields ripen later, the harvesting continues, but the work is on the wane.
*796 There is time to rest now, and enjoy the Christmas
[177] *fiestas.* Preparations are under way. In many houses, particularly in those nearest the *plaza*, where Spanish influence is strongest and where there may be a little money to spend, the nine *posadas* are celebrated as they are celebrated all over Mexico. By this time the matrons of the neighborhood have arranged in whose house will take place each of the nine *fiestas.* Nine women will take turns as hostess, dividing the responsibility and the expense. Someone has gone to
[437] Oacalco for sugar cane, to Yautepec for peanuts. The
[484] women are making little paper baskets (*alcartazes*) to hold candies and peanuts.

It is not in one of the larger houses near the *plaza*
[868] that boys are learning to sing the songs of *Los Pas-*
[533] *tores.* In the yard of a smaller, more Indian house in some street off the *plaza* a score or more of boys are seated on the ground learning the songs from a *maestro* who is the repository of this local tradition.

[794] The *mayordomos*, with their assistants, decorate the
[782] chapels with flowers and cedar boughs and colored
[439] tissue paper. People cut branches of poinsettia, now

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948) 1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

blanco, *pepitillo blanco*, and *semilla azul*.[8] *Ancho blanco* is the most widely used corn; *pepitillo* is used only in the heavier clay soils. *Semilla azul* is used for replanting cornfields which have not germinated, because it ripens faster and catches up with the earlier plantings.

A large number of Tepoztecans still follow the custom of having the seed blessed by the priest on the day of San Isidro, May fifteenth. Generally the women take the corn to the church. Each woman selects about ten of the finest ears of corn, as well as some of her best beans and squash. She may also take along some copal and a censer. As many as two hundred women may attend this blessing. As they burn the incense in the church, the priest comes out and blesses the seed with holy water. The ears of corn which have been blessed are to be placed in the milpas to rot and must not be burned, or the seed will not grow.

The ancient custom of addressing the seed in Náhuatl, before planting, is still remembered by most men over age fifty. Many informants recall that their grandfathers spoke to the corn in a short formal ritual, before planting. The ceremony in the fields was often accompanied by great emotion and even weeping. One of these speeches translated from the Náhuatl follows:

"My beloved body and strength, go and bear the cold and the storm of the seasons; all is for us."[9]

Today a similar ritual is still followed by a relatively small number of Tepoztecans, except that the recitations include references to God and are said in Spanish. The following are examples of present-day blessings:

God bless you. I bury you and if you return while I still live the satisfaction will be mine; if not then my descendants.

In the name of God I am going to plant this seed. I implore Thee to bless my work.

Bless your sainted name God Our Father who is the first one to care for us. From here you go out and from where you go out God wishes you to return. For I am going to throw you into the field and you will remain only with the blessing of God. And may God free you so that we all will have something.

In planting corn, two men and one team of oxen are the minimum requirement. More than one team is rarely employed on a single field. However, two or three men may be used if the owner has a large family or can afford to hire *peones*. In planting on land that has been newly broken, the plow is always pulled at right angles to the existing furrows. One man, the oxen driver, leads the oxen while another man follows and drops four seeds in the furrow for each plant at a space of about a pace apart. The seed is dropped in front of the left toe, and the dirt is pushed over the seeds with the right foot. In planting the first few seeds, some Tepoztecans still follow the old custom of making the sign of the cross with their hand as they drop the seeds. Older men believe that planting one day after the

[8] See Appendix A, p. 449.

[9] "Notlashocuyo yocatnin xomohuicatetza quexquich cequintli tonalli huan yecatl timochical huitiul topampa."

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948)1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

243 appearance of the new moon brings a better harvest. The rows of corn are 80 or 90 cm. apart, depending upon the fertility of the field. Yokes are therefore two standard sizes.

Some farmers mix their corn seed with beans: *frijol chino, pepita,* and *frijol colorado.* When this is done, no special number of seed is used. After the first cultivation, *frijol negro* or *bayo* may be planted between the corn hills.

In planting a field that has been prepared by the *dos arados* rather than by the *barbecho,* the plow is directed right through the middle of the old corn beds, and this is known as the *tercer arado,* completing the three plowings involved in the preparation and planting. Both in the newly broken ground and in the land that has been in cultivation the preceding year, the *arado criollo* (wooden plow) is used in planting, and a piece of wood is inserted which acts as a double mouldboard and throws the earth to both sides. The amount of corn that is planted per day depends upon the type of corn and the speed of the oxen and driver. On the average, two men working with a team of oxen can plant eight to ten *cuartillos* of *maíz ancho* per day, and about five to six *cuartillos* of *maíz pepitillo.*

First Cultivation: Two or three cultivations are generally given to cornfields; these cultivations are known as *el primer mano* or *el primer beneficio, el segundo mano,* and *el tercer mano.*

The first cultivation of the corn is generally done twenty days after the planting when the corn shoots are still very small.[10] Again the steel plow and the short yoke is used, and the oxen walk between the furrows on either side of the corn bed. The plow is pulled to the right of the row of young corn, so that the earth is turned away from the corn. The driver walks to the left of the row and holds the plow with his right hand. Two *peones* are used in addition to the driver. The *peones* follow the plow, staying on the left side of the row of corn; they bend over the corn and with their hands they carefully push the earth around the young plants. The two *peones* work simultaneously about twenty feet apart and by-pass each other when they reach a section that has already been cultivated. The first cultivation of a plot of ten to twelve *cuartillos,* using two *peones,* takes on an average of two days.

Tepoztecans have an ingenious way of fighting ants which threaten the young corn. When the young shoots are about to appear, they take the leaves of a tree called *yamatl* (of the *amate* family), chop up the leaves, and sprinkle them over the rows of corn, and especially on ant nests. The ants prefer this leaf to corn, and Tepoztecans claim it makes them thin and eventually kills them. The leaf contains a white, milky substance so strong that it will peel the skin off a man's hand. Another tree whose leaves are used for the same purpose is *yoyohtli.*

Second Cultivation: The second cultivation begins about twenty days after the first cultivation is completed, generally in the last week of July. The process is very

[10] In fields which have gathered much water, Tepoztecans may plow in the furrows about eight days after planting, to spread the water. Such plowing is called *sobernal.*

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948) 1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

and brush are then built around the clearing to keep out stray animals that usually graze in these areas. Most *tlacolol* clearings are used two years in succession, and the work of clearing is considerably reduced the second year, although it generally takes 10 to 15 days to clear the milpa of weeds the second year.

Planting: Planting in *tlacolol* begins in May, before the rains. This planting of the corn "dry," as Tepoztecans say, eliminates the danger of rodents getting at it. The corn used in *tlacolol* is a very hardy variety which sends roots out in all directions and which penetrates the rocky terrain. In planting, the *coxala* or *coa* are used.

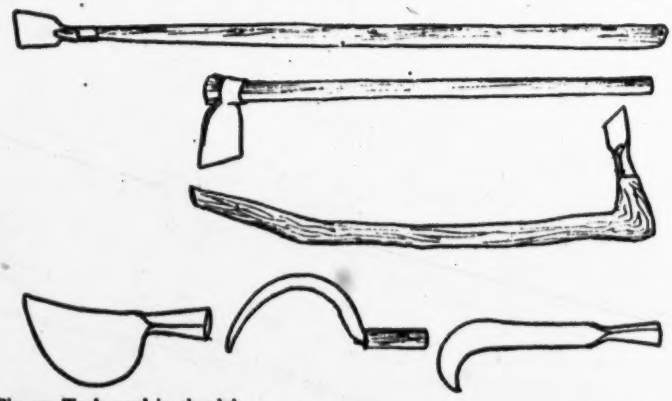

Fig. 29. Tools used in *tlacolol*.

A small hole about four to six inches deep is made wherever there is enough soil, and seeds are dropped in. Every interstitial space among the rocks is used. There are therefore no orderly rows in the planting. Beans and squash may be planted with the corn. A good worker can plant about one-half to three-quarters of a *cuartillo* a day; at this rate it would take about twenty man-days to plant the equivalent of one hectare of corn in *tlacolol*.

Cultivation: Unlike plow culture, there is no cultivation in *tlacolol*, nor is the corn hilled. There is generally at least one weeding which is done about forty days after planting, when the corn is about two feet tall. Weeding is of two kinds. In one kind, the weeds are pulled out by hand, and this process is known as the *tlamaltequa*. This is the preferred process, and it is believed that yields are higher if it is done this way. However, this is difficult and time-consuming. One man can weed about three *cuartillos* per day in *tlacolol* of *texcal* and considerably less in *tlacolol* of *cerro*. If there is some delay on the part of the farmer and if the weeds have grown very tall by the time weeding is begun, the machete is used. (See Fig. 30.)

After the weeding, the milpa is left alone except for occasional visits to check the enclosures. Sometimes night visits will be made and firecrackers will be set

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948) 1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

is to provide women with an excuse for visiting each other, and that it has extended their social life.

There are less than a dozen battery-operated radios in the village, and most of them have been purchased since 1944. There are also about 44 spring-driven phonographs.

DIET

As in rural Mexico as a whole, the basic diet of the people of Tepoztlán consists of corn, beans, and chile. Squash, which was reported by Redfield to be an important element in the food complex of Tepoztlán, is not part of the regular daily diet and is eaten only a few months of the year. The proportion of corn, beans, and chile in the diet varies sharply from family to family and depends upon the season, income, and food habits of the family. The consumption of corn, which is the major food staple, ranges from 10 per cent to as much as 70 per cent of the family diet. In general, the poorer the family, the higher the proportion of corn, beans, and chile in the diet.

Yellow corn is most commonly used in Tepoztlán, but blue and white corn is also locally grown and used. Corn is most frequently eaten in the form of tortillas and occasionally in the form of *atole* (gruel). Tamales made of corn dough are eaten at certain fiestas; corn *pozole* and corn *pinole* are known but are not characteristic foods in this village. The preparation of the corn dough or *nixtamal* with lime is the same in Tepoztlán as in other parts of Mexico. There is a wide variety of beans in Tepoztlán, but the most commonly eaten are red kidney beans cooked with lard, chile, and sometimes tomato and onion. Green chile, ground with onion and tomato, is prepared daily as a sauce to be eaten with tortilla and whatever other foods are served. *Chile pasilla*, a large dried red chile, is more expensive and is generally reserved for use in the fiesta *mole* sauce.

The basic diet is supplemented by many other foods which are either locally cultivated, gathered wild, or purchased in the stores and market place. Among the foods used in Tepoztlán are the following:

zapote	beans	honey
banana	avocado	spices
orange	hog plum	herbs
lemon, lime	*chirimoya*	beef
grapefruit	*mameys*	pork
chayote	papaya	chicken
manzanillos	mango	turkey
tomato	squash	milk
sugar cane	peanuts	eggs
pitos	coffee	cheese
acacia seeds	prickly pear	clotted cream

The fields, forests, and mountain sides provide many free foods the year round. There are several varieties of wild edible greens, which are important in that they

2;Lewis E-5 (1943-1948)1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

provide food elements which the Tepoztecan diet would otherwise lack, since there is little cultivation of leafy green vegetables. But it is impossible to determine to what extent wild greens are consumed, because they are considered very poor fare, and Tepoztecans do not readily admit eating them. During times of scarcity a large number of families eat wild greens in quantity several times a week, and the chronically poor eat them regularly throughout the year. During the Revolution many families escaped starvation by subsisting almost entirely on wild plants. The names of most of these plants are native Indian terms, and are as follows:

quintoniles	*papalo*
verdolaga	*chipiles*
tesquite	*tequesquite*
pipitacos	*quelites*

Violets boiled with *tequesquite* are also eaten. The herbs are well-known spices, and medicinal grasses or leaves are used to make a variety of teas.

Additional fruits and vegetables are brought in by traveling merchants or are purchased in the large market in Cuernavaca. However, most of these are expensive and only the few well-to-do families of Tepoztlán can afford to purchase them more or less regularly. Foods not locally produced and commonly purchased in the stores of Tepoztlán, Yautepec, Cuernavaca, or Mexico City are bread,[1] sugar, salt, rice, certain types of chile and beans, noodles, and dried codfish. Chocolate is also purchased but is considered a luxury. Foods which are slowly becoming more popular but which are still purchased by a small minority are evaporated and powdered milk, canned sardines, tomato herring, or other fish.

The eating of white bread made of wheat flour is of particular interest in Mexico, since it is a relatively new trait and one which has been taken to indicate the degree of acculturation of individuals and groups. In Tepoztlán, bread is considered a very desirable food; and often the social and economic status of a family is judged in terms of the amount of bread that it consumes. From the Mexican Census of 1940, which included a question designed to estimate the number of persons who eat bread fairly regularly, we learned that over 31 per cent of the population of Tepoztlán eat bread. At present there is scarcely a family that does not eat some bread during the week or month, though it may be but once or twice. It is especially favored as a food for very small children, and even the poorest family seeks to provide a piece of bread daily for its youngest child. There is no indication, however, that bread will eventually displace the tortilla; at most, bread consumption among well-to-do families may represent about 10 per cent of the total food expenditure.

There is, of course, much variation in the actual consumption of food. Except among the wealthier families, irregularity in diet is characteristic throughout the year, and few families maintain a uniformly good diet from day to day even according to local standards. The type and quantity of food consumed is determined by the season, the fiesta calendar, and, most of all, the amount of cash on hand. "When

[1] Bread is baked locally, but wheat flour is purchased outside.